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Boston Redevelopment Authority
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PROJECT
June, 1963
Planning Report #6

TOURIST CENTER

This report is one of a series being prepared by the Boston Redevelopment Authority staff to explore and summarize various elements of the CBD planning work during the Survey and Planning period. It is to be used for analysis by the BRA, CCBD, Victor Gruen Associates and other CBD consultants as designated by the BRA. The report is subject to additions, alterations and deletions during the planning process. It is to be used during the planning of the CBD Project as a synthesis of the known facts and planning ideas to date, and is <u>not</u> presented as a policy statement.

Central Business District Project
Planning Report #6
TOURIST CENTER

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I. INTRODUCTION

New England has continued to be a major area for visitors of many kinds. The forces of attraction include --

vacation areas - historical and recreational

industry and commerce

research

conventions

medical centers

educational institutions

cultural activities and centers

commercial entertainment

Within the general six state area, the Boston region has a concentration of attractions for the visitor.

There are numerous organizations, public and private, which promote and give service to the visitors. These groups are primarily independent of one another and often serve in competitive roles.

The concept of a tourist center is basically a centralization of all services, information centers and promotional activities into one easily identified, accessible spot. The center could gain wide recognition as <u>the</u> place for visitors to come to first. Here, independent organizations would be gathered for mutual benefit to offer a "smorgasbord" of everything in New England that would be of interest to visitors, no matter what their reason for coming might be.

II. LOCATION

Within the Boston metropolitan area, the core is the most accessible point. Prerequisites for a site location within the core are: centrality to the major centers of visitor attraction; availability of space; clarity of vehicular access and potential parking space; potential visual identification; and, existing and potential transient accommodations.

The Park Square area best fulfills the requirements stated above. It is well located on the peninsula for access to the major urban centers of visitor attractions (see drawing A). The area will be clearly accessible from the major vehicular routes from the west -- the Turnpike Extension and the S. E. Expressway -- via the proposed Turnpike marginal roads and the Charles Street extension (See Drawing B).

With the Charles Street Extension and the elimination of superfluous streets in the Park Square area, a large amount of developable land would be available. Seven structures in the area would most likely remain under any scheme.

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT
FREEDOM TRAIL
SOUTH STATION
PROPOSED STADIUM
GOVERNMENT CENTER
RETAIL CORE
T-NEMC
ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT
BEACON HILL
MASS GEN. HOSP.
CITY HOSP.
SCIENCE PARK
BACK BAY RETAIL
ESPLANADE
LIBRARY
PRUDENTIAL CENTER
SYMPHONY HALL
CHARLES RIVER BASIN
NORTHEASTERN
MIT
ART MUSEUM
FENS
FENWAY PARK
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
HARVARD
TOURIST CENTER
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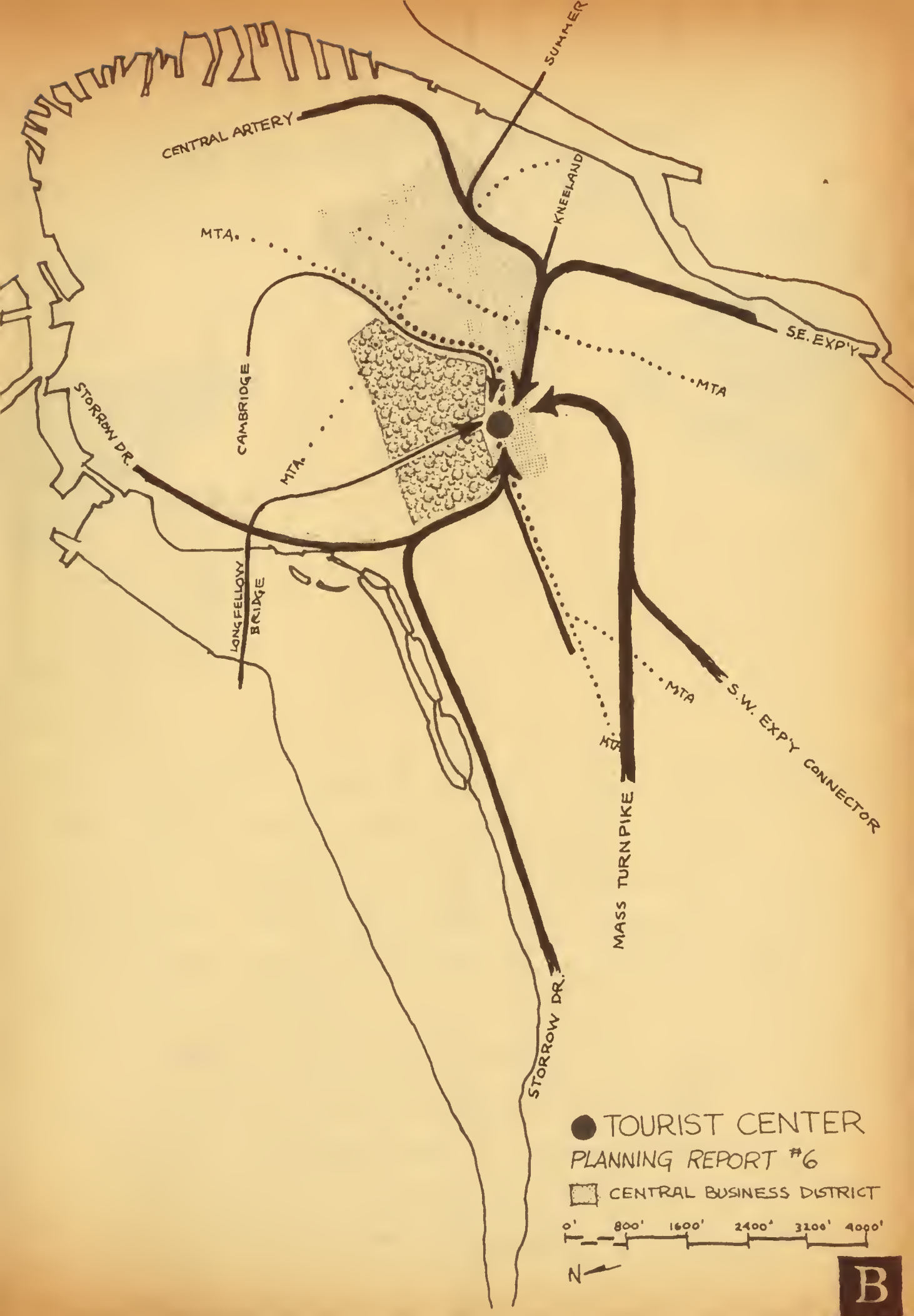
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CENTRAL ARTERY
KNEELAND
MTA.
S.E. EXP'Y
MTA
CAMBRIDGE
STORROW DR.
MTA.
LONGFELLOW BRIDGE
MTA
S.W. EXP'Y CONNECTOR
MTA
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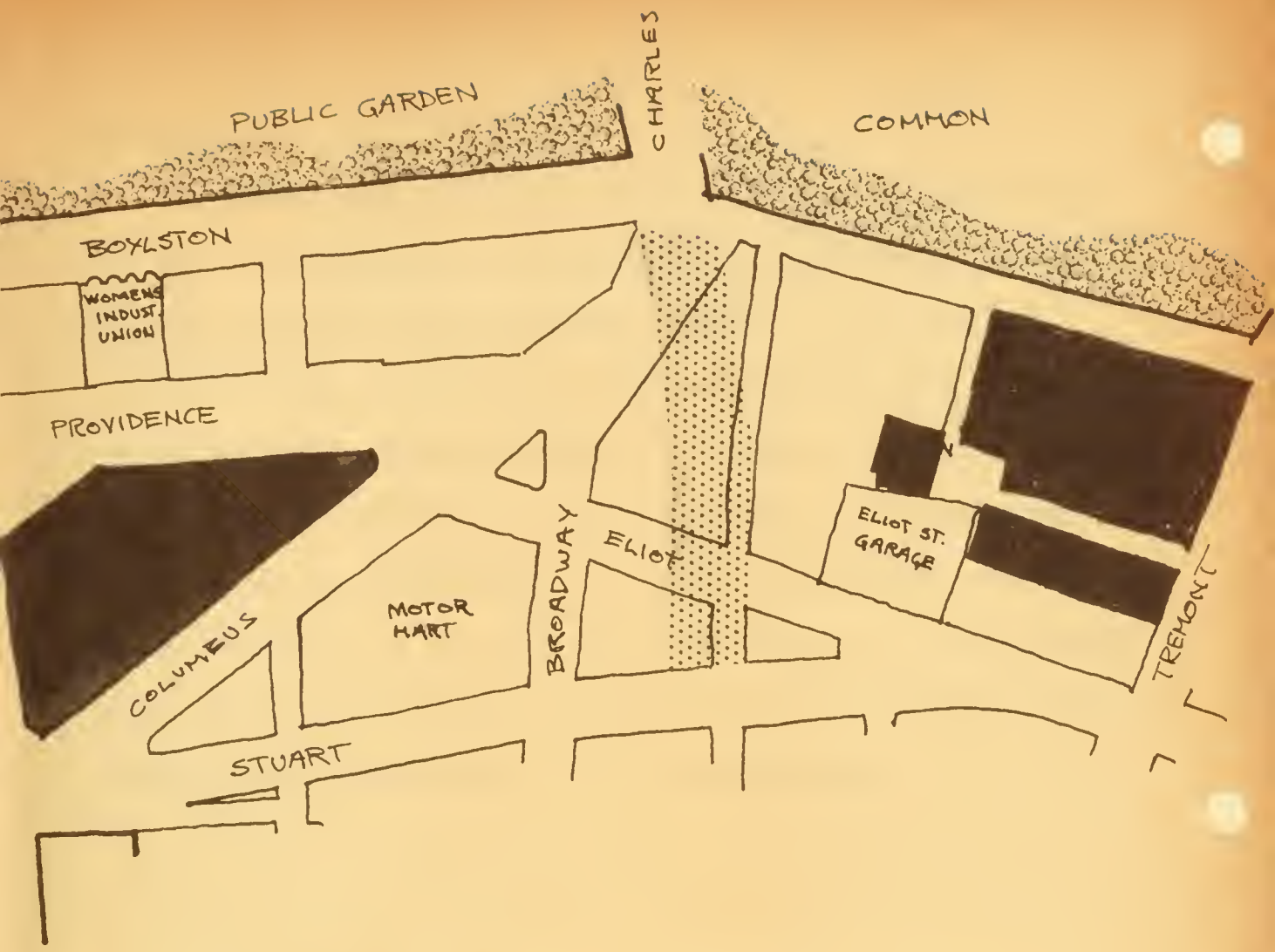


They are, as shown in black on the drawing above: The Statler-Hilton Hotel and office building; the Little, Colonial and Walker office buildings; the Tavern Club; and, the Saxon and Gary Theatres. Other structures that might be desirable to retain include the Motor Mart and Eliot Street garages, and the Women's Industrial Union.

The proximity of the Public Garden and Common insure a highly attractive setting for the Center in Park Square.

A secondary beneficial effect of locating the Center in Park Square would be the desirable creation of a major new activity to help provide a strong link between the CBD and the

Back Bay.

Alternate sites for the Center within or adjacent to the CBD are: the Waterfront -- identifiable and attractive, but not centrally located; Government Center -- accessible, identifiable but lacking space and centrality; Old Boston Center (Washington-School-State) -- close to historic sites, but limited accessibility by auto and competitive for prime office space; South Station -- good accessibility, easily identified, but not close to major attractions. None of these sites have the existing or potential advantages for the Center in as great a quantity as a site in Park Square.

III. ELEMENTS OF THE CENTER

A. Identification

It would be mandatory that the physical image of the Center be unique and easily identified. The low density development at Park Square offers the opportunity to establish a punctuation mark in the valley or saddle of core activity between the more fully developed CBD and the Back Bay high-rise office center.

A graphic symbol, utilized with widespread publicity, repeated on signs leading to the Center, and expressed by the physical form of the Center itself, would intensify the identification of the Center.

B. Participants

Participation would occur as information centers, exhibits, ticket sales, programs, etc. for the following organizations or enterprises:

1. PROMOTION --

   6 State Depts. of Commerce

   Major Cities Chambers of Commerce

   New England Oriented Publications

   Private Advertising Agencies

   Restaurant Associations

   Retail Trade Boards

   Transportation Companies

Industry & Commerce

Port Authorities

2. RECREATION

Heritage Trail

Freedom Trail

Ski Resorts, Beach Resorts, etc.

Historic Restorations

Federal, State and Local Park Systems

Bus Turs

Boat Cruises

Theatres - legitimate and movie

Restaurants

3. CONVENTION

Major Hotels

Convention Halls

Industries

Retail

4. TRANSPORTATION

Airlines

Bus Lines (Interstate)

Car Rentals

Railroads

Heliport

MTA Information Center

5. ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotels, Motels -- central clearing house

Resorts -- Inns

Real Estate -- and housing for new residents

Student Housing

YMCA - YWCA

6. EDUCATIONAL & CULTURAL

Colleges & Universities

Museums

Libraries

Churches

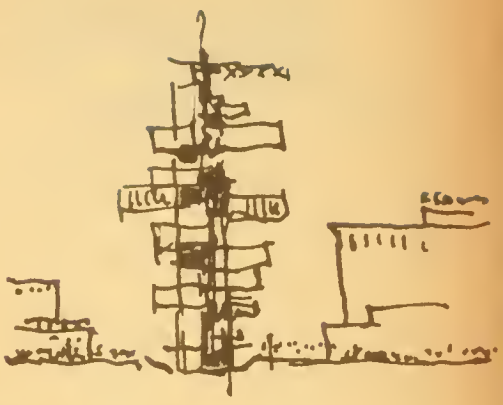
Health Center

Symphonies & music festivals

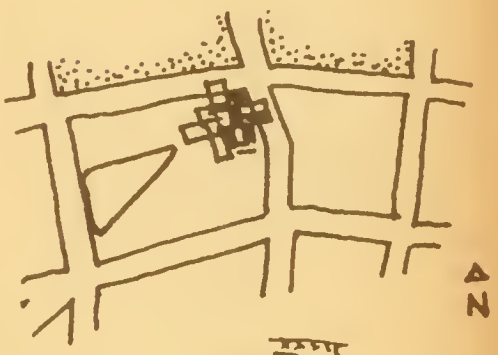
Art Festivals

C. Plan Schematic

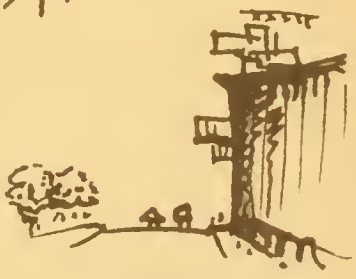
1. Structure and Site



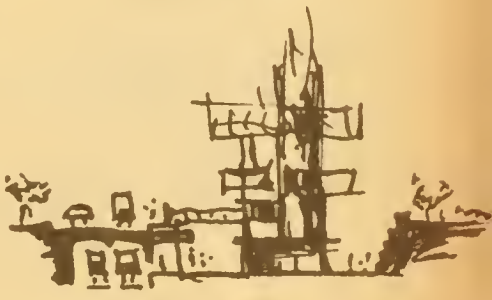
The basic structure for the Center could be a tower. Because the space demands must be flexible, a unique building might occur. A central core could be developed which would house the basic services -- elevators, sewerage, communications, electricity, etc. From this core units within a predetermined module could be attached. Possibly, the core would be topped by a permanently mounted crane for easy expansion of the structure. The structure would become an ever-changing physical manifestation of the actitities it would house.



Within the Park Square area, the southeast corner of Boylston and Charles Street would be the most desirable location for the basic building.



Some of the modular elements or units might protrude, at upper levels, across the curb lines of Boylston and Charles, therefore assuring visual recognition from major lines of access.



The core of the structure could rise from a plaza at the subway level under Boylston Street. At this level, a moving sidewalk parallel to the subway could connect the Arlington, Boylston, Washington-Essex Stations of the MTA and give the Center excellent connection to the transit system.

2. Parking

The entire area for redevelopment could have multi-level sub-surface parking, possibly connecting at the second level below grade to the expanded Under-Common Garage.

3. Bus Terminal

An interstate bus terminal could be located within the Center either as a separate structure or combined with the garage facilities.

4. Internal Core Transportation

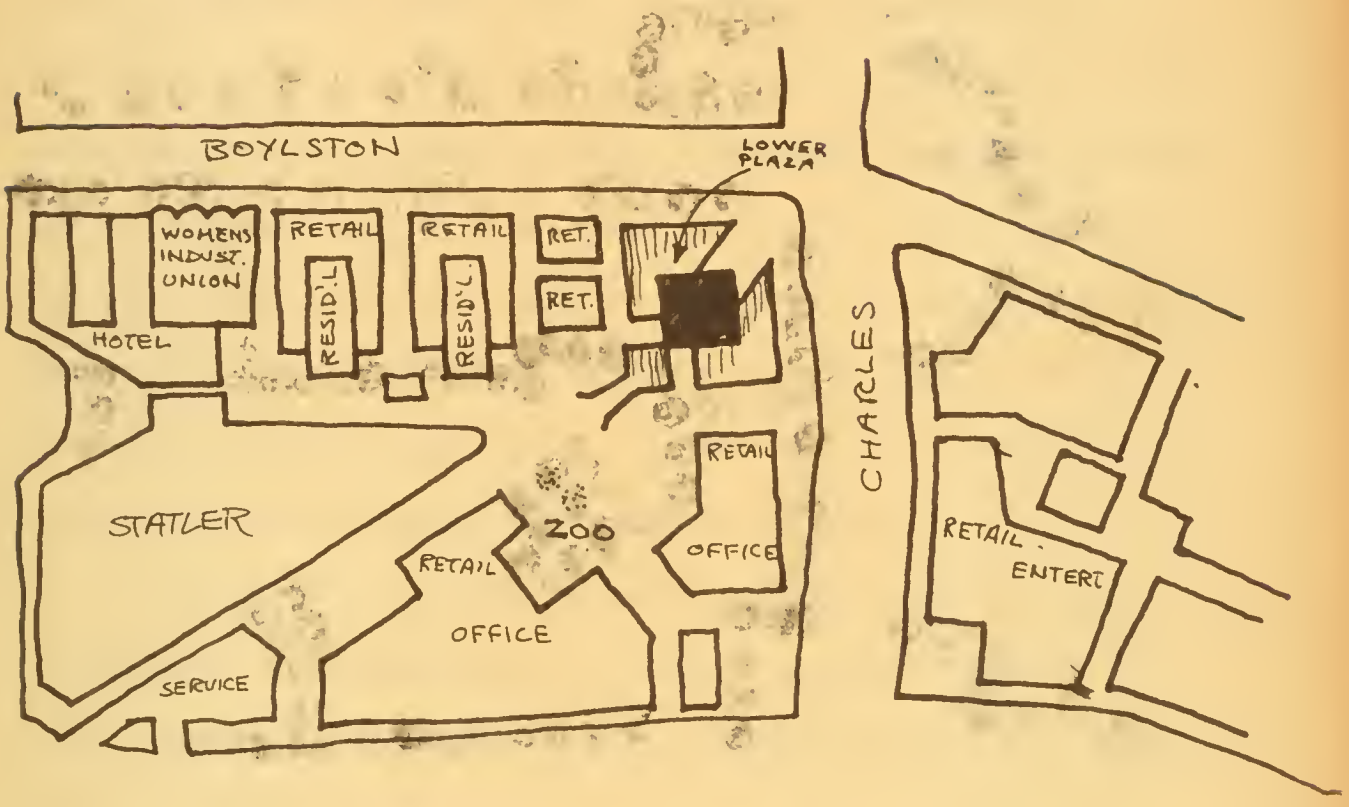
A major station for a new form of rapid, inexpensive mass transit could be developed within the Center. The system would make the Center excellently accessible from the extremities of the core-Government Center and Prudential Center.

5. Pedestrian Areas

The entire Park Square area could become a series of intimate pedestrian ways giving the Center attractive convenient pedestrian linkages to the Entertainment District, T.NEMC, Bay Village, Back Bay and the Common and Public Garden.

6. Ancillary Uses

The Center could be surrounded by retail specialty shops, restaurants, hotel facilities, entertainment facilities, a small zoo, offices on upper levels and high rise-high income residential.

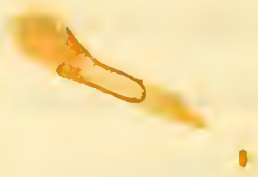


IV. DEVELOPMENT

The parking, public open space, moving sidewalk and internal core transportation facilities would be built with public funds and represent a part of the non-cash credits for the local 1/3 share of the CBD Urban Renewal Project. The basic Center structure could be a private development and tax-producing real estate. Various methods could be employed. The core structure could be owned with rental of services to the participants and the modules could be developed separately and owned by the individual groups. This method would help to insure a dynamic structure with the elements clearly expressing the individuality of the participants.

A non-profit corporation could be organized for the development and operation of the basic structure with a sliding scale of payments to the city based upon net income from the tenants.

The ancillary private structures would be taxable and the design and other controls would be established by the Urban Renewal Plan.



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